Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System,
Control Station
Worker Cottage (Building 103)
Bishop Creek
Bishop Vicinity
Inyo County
California

HAER No. CA-145-1-C

HAER
CAL
14-BISH.V,
2C-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HAER
CAL
14-BISH.V,
2C-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, Control Station **HAER No. CA-145-1-C**
Worker Cottage (Building 103)
Bishop Creek
Bishop Vicinity
Inyo County
California

Location: Near Bishop Creek in Southeast 1/4 of Section 17, Township 7 South, Range 32 East, M.D.M, Inyo County, California (UTM Coordinates 11/368907/432939), in the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountain Range approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the town of Bishop, California, and 225 air miles due north of Los Angeles.

Date of Construction: 1916

Builder: Unknown

Present Owner: Southern California Edison Company
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

Original Use: Worker Cottage

Present Use: Worker Cottage

Significance: Building 103, was one of the earliest buildings constructed at the Control Station. It has always served as a residence for employees of the Southern Sierras Power Company who worked at the adjacent operations building. Building 103 is significant for its contribution to an understanding of the historic character of the physical and social environment of the Control Station compound. The Bishop Creek System is considered significant for its role: (1) in the expansion of hydroelectric generation technology, (2) in the development of eastern California, and (3) in the development of long-distance power transmission and distribution.

Report Prepared By: Thomas T. Taylor
Southern California Edison Company
Environmental Affairs Division
Rosemead, CA 91770

Date: August 31, 1995

I. DESCRIPTION

Building 103 Control Station was originally constructed in 1916 as an employee residence; a function it has continued to serve to the present time. It is a one-story with basement structure, rectangular in plan, built in the Craftsman Bungalow style. It has had major alterations from the original plan including a shed-roofed addition to the rear of the house, enclosure of the front porch, removal of an interior divider wall between the living room and the dining room, an expanded kitchen, and a remodeled bathroom.

Control Station and Plant No. 5 are southwest of Plant No. 6 and northeast of Plant Nos. 2, 3 and 4. The Bishop Creek System is about five miles southwest of the town of Bishop, Inyo County, California. The five power plants in the system, located primarily along the south, middle, and north forks of Bishop Creek, are at varying elevations on the steep eastern slopes of the southern Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

Building 103 is located with the main group of residential buildings on the northeast side of Control Station. All of these houses are located on the west side of a narrow paved street that runs southwest-northeast on the east side of the Control Station Substation. Building 103 is situated on an area sloping gradually to the north with no apparent landscaping other than a low rock wall across the front (east) end and part of the north side, and two large cottonwood trees located in front and on the south side (Photos 145-1-C-1, 145-1-C-2). Vegetation is native sage brush. A paved parking area is located on the north side of the house.

Exterior dimensions of Building 103 measure 48 feet by 27 1/2 feet. The long axis is orientated east/west and is characterized by an end-gabled asphalt shingle roof. The roof structure has exposed purlins and rafter ends reflecting the Craftsman construction era. Large rectangular louvered vents are located high on both gable ends (Photos 145-1-C-2 and 145-1-C-4). The exterior is characterized by rough textured stucco walls pierced by large, wood-frame, 1-light over 1-light, double-hung windows with simple wood surrounds (Photo 145-1-C-4). A slightly smaller double-hung window is used in the bathroom (Photo 145-1-C-2 and SCE drawing 571392-0). The kitchen has a black aluminum sliding window over the sink on the south side of the building (Photo 145-1-C-4).

The rear porch has been extensively remodeled by addition of a shed-roofed extension. This extension includes a utility room adjacent to the kitchen and an porch or separate room enclosed with a band of nearly continuous glazing, composed predominately of large 1-light fixed windows. This rear addition features asbestos-shingle siding and criss-cross supports for

that portion overhanging the basement area (Photo 145-1-C-5). The basement is accessed under this structure either by a set of wood stairs on the south side of the house (Photos 145-1-C-4 and 145-1-C-7), or three concrete steps on the north side (Photos 145-1-C-5 and 145-1-C-6).

The 30 by 26 foot unfinished basement area was construction into an excavation about four feet deeper (relative to outside surface height) on the east (front) end and south side than the rest of the house. The basement east end and south side is comprised of an unbroken concrete wall, carried under the rear addition along the south side by a rock retaining wall (Photos 145-1-C-7, 145-1-C-8, 145-1-C-9, 145-1-C-10, 145-1-C-11, and 145-1-C-12). The north wall is pierced by three 1-light, side-hinged windows with simple wood trim. Concrete shear walls and 4-inch by 4-inch studs support the house and divide the basement into two small (11 and 9 foot by 13 foot) and two large (19 and 21 foot by 13 foot) areas. Two entry doors are on the west end under the addition. Lighting is provided by several single ceiling electric fixtures fitted with single bulbs. A double basin sink is located on the east wall of the north side north/south concrete shear wall near the northwest corner.

In the original plan for building 103, the front entry for the house was through an off-center opening at the front of a recessed, full-width porch (SCE drawing 571392-0). This plan was modified by a more symmetrical placement of the entry door near the center of the housefront, and between two 1-light over 1-light double-hung windows (Photos 145-1-C-13 and 145-1-C-14). At the same time entrance to the front porch was changed to the south side (Photo 145-1-C-13). The porch has been screened in but still features three massive support columns with simple square capitals and bases (Photos 145-1-C-13 and 145-1-C-15). Widely spaced, square balusters are used to support the porch's rectangular railing (Photo 145-1-C-13).

Building 103 has about 950 square feet of interior space divided into six rooms: a living room, two bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen, and a utility room. The house's compact plan has no halls with the rooms opening directly one to another.

Remnants of the wall separating the original 12 1/2 by 13 foot living room from the 10 by 13 foot dining room are clearly evident in the 23 by 13 foot combined living/dining room (Photos 145-1-C-16 and 145-1-C-17). The 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows are original; but the 1-light, solid wood front door is a later addition. The combined living/dining room is lighted by two ceiling electric fixtures, one of which is a fan. Base moldings are present, but there are no ceiling cornices in this house. Flooring is wall to wall carpet. A brick pedestal for a wood-burning stove/heater is present against the north wall

about mid-room; a ceiling vent is visible directly above this feature. The combined living/dining room opens on the east wall into the kitchen. Five-panel wood doors are an original feature found throughout the interior. Two of these, one at the east end and one at the west end of the north wall open from the combined living/dining room into the two bedrooms.

The 6 1/2 by 13 foot kitchen features a relatively modern range, built-in double basin sink, counters and cabinets (Photos 145-1-C-18, 145-1-C-19, and 145-1-C-20). Three quarters of the north side walls are wood paneled. Flooring is linoleum; lighting is by a single ceiling electrical fixture. Built-in cabinets are suspended above a refrigerator space and washer hookup in the 6 1/2 by 10 foot space at the back of the kitchen which was originally a rear porch; wall remnants are evident between this spaee and the rest of the kitchen. A 1-light over 1-light fixed window, single panel wood door opens to the south side of the house (Photo 145-1-C-21).

A solid door from the kitchen leads to the enclosed 10 by 16 foot utility room addition; an original five-panel door with wood plank surrounds on the coarse stuccoed west wall leads to the back bedroom (Photo 145-1-C-22). A continuous line of glazing across the entire north and west wall is a distinguishing characteristic of this room. The utility room is lighted by a single ceiling electrical fixture. flooring is linoleum tile. A table supported by legs on one side and wall brackets on the other is attached to the east wall (Photo 145-1-C-23).

The 10 by 13 foot front bedroom is accessed through an original five-panel door on the south wall from the combined living/dining room (Photo 145-1-C-24). Both the front and rear bedrooms feature 3 1/2 by 5 foot walk-in closets. The closet in the front bedroom, located through a five-panel door at the south end of the west wall, contains a ceiling crawlspace into the attic (Photo 145-1-C-25). The front bedroom is lighted by a single ceiling fixture and two 1-light over 1-light, double hung, wood-frame windows (Photo 145-1-C-26). Flooring is wall to wall carpet. A five panel door at the north end of the west wall leads to the extensively remodeled bathroom (Photo 145-1-C-27).

According to the original house plan (SCE drawing 571392-0), the bathroom did not have a shower stall, and the toilet, sink, and bathtub were located on opposite walls from where they are now (Photos 145-1-C-28, 145-1-C-29, and 145-1-C-30). The bathroom is lighted by a single ceiling electrical fixture and a small wall electrical fixture adjacent the entry door from the front bedroom. Flooring is linoleum.

The 13 by 11 foot back bedroom is a near mirror of the front bedroom, albeit slightly larger. The main difference is an original 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame window on the rear (west) wall was replaced with a 1-light three-panel door when the rear addition was constructed; an original 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame window pierces the north wall. This bedroom is also accessed from the combined living/dining room and through the bathroom (Photo 145-1-C-31). Flooring is wall to wall carpet. Lighting is by way of a single ceiling electrical fixture.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Please refer to the "Historical Context" sections in the general report for Bishop Creek, Control Station (HAER No. CA-145-1) for historical information regarding Control Station and the Bishop Creek System.

Each of the five Bishop Creek power plants, and Control Station, was originally developed with an associated residential complex occupied by operating and maintenance crews; all have now been removed with exception of small remaining enclaves at Plant 4, Control Station, and a single house at Plant 6. The company development of employee living areas permitted comprehensive planning seldom seen in privately developed residential areas during this period. Although lacking many of the landscape refinements of Plant 4, the Control Station compound nevertheless developed a unique character in keeping with its surroundings.

III. SOURCES

Coleman, Charles M.
1952 P. G. and E. of California: The Centennial Story of Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 1852-1952. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York.

Elliott, Russell R.
1984 History of Nevada. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

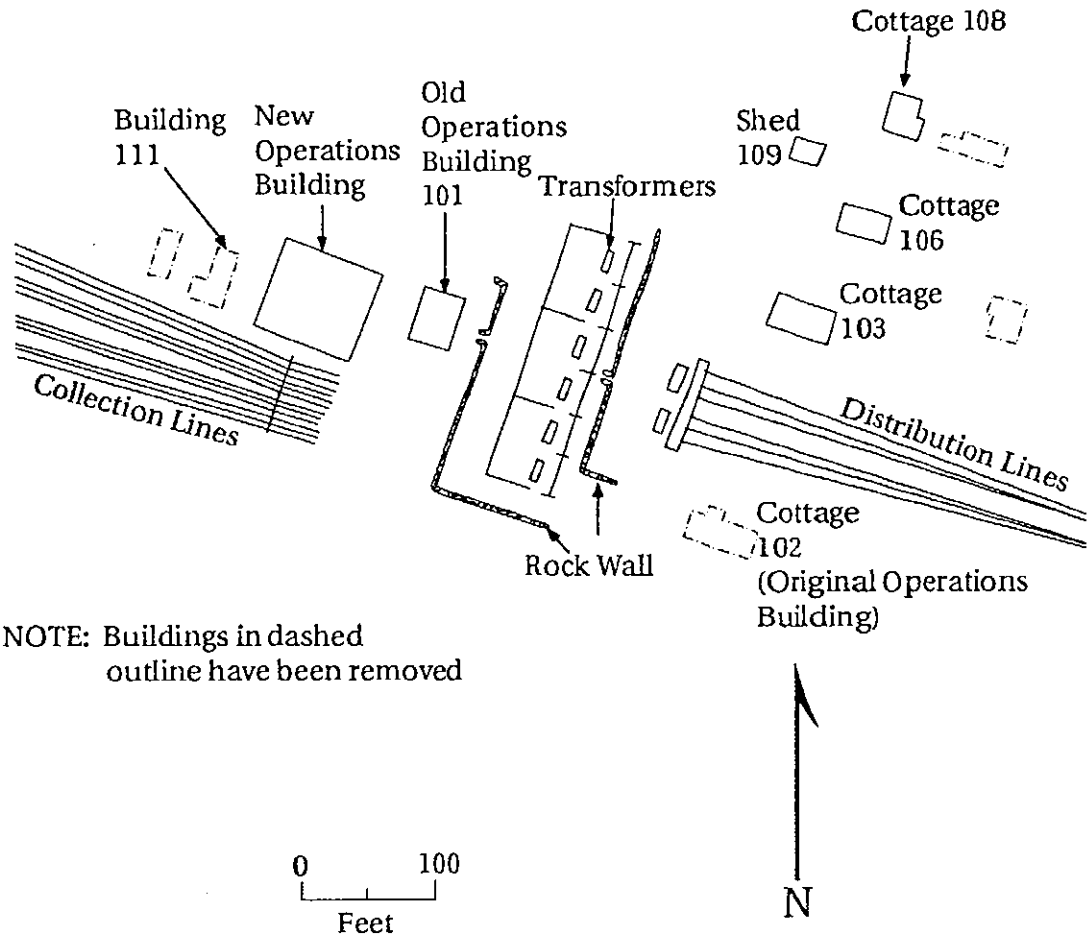
Intermountain Research
1986 An Architectural and Historical Evaluation of Structures Associated with the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Power System, Inyo County, California, December, 1986. Unpublished report prepared for Southern California Edison.

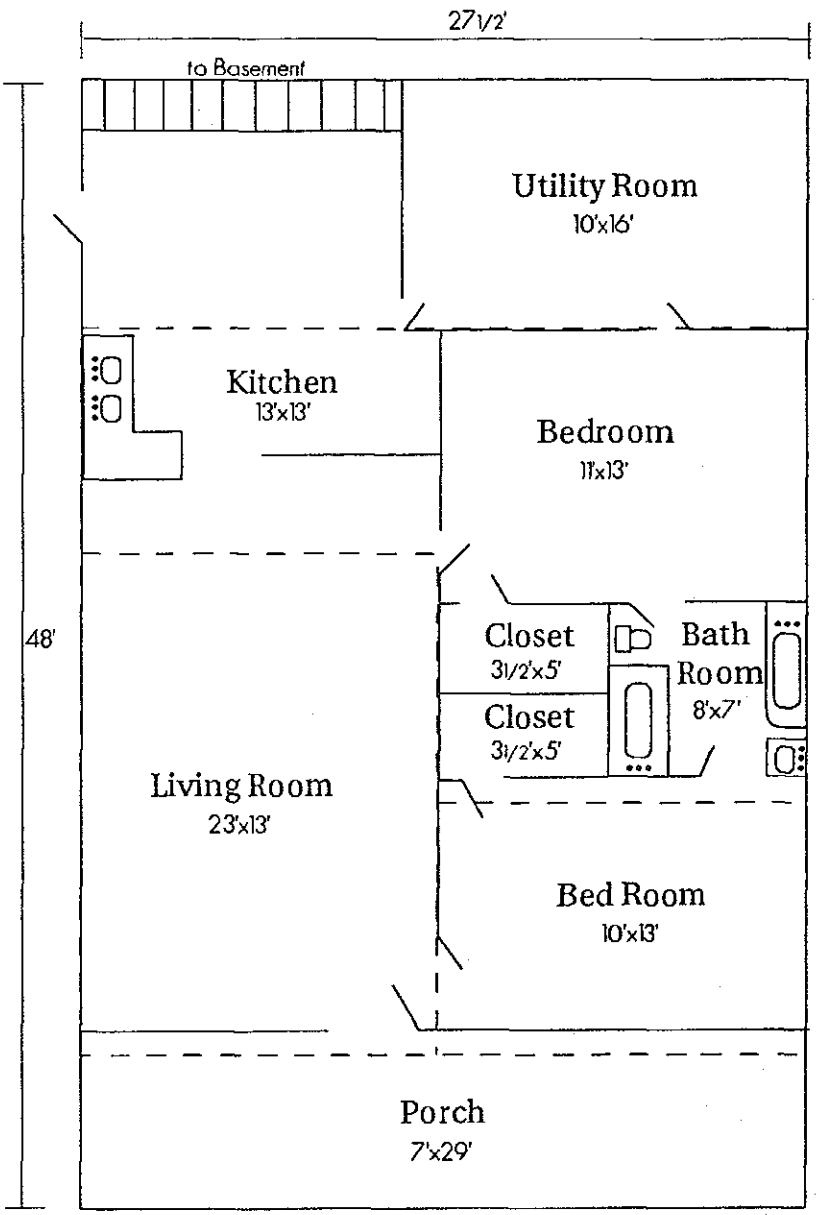
Theodoratus Cultural Research, Inc.
1988 Evaluation of the Historic Resources of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, July, 1988. Unpublished report prepared for Southern California Edison.

Whiffen, Marcus
1969 American Architecture Since 1780. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This Historic American Engineering Record documentation of Building 103 Control Station, a structure at the Control Station of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, was undertaken because the building represents excess housing. SCE is continuing to automate the Bishop Creek power plants. The automation of the power plants has made it unnecessary to have on-site crews, thus, residential units like this house have become obsolete.


Cottage 108
Building 111
New Operations Building
Old Operations Building 101
Transformers
Shed 109
Cottage 106
Cottage 103
Collection Lines
Distribution Lines
Cottage 102 (Original Operations Building)
Rock Wall
NOTE: Buildings in dashed outline have been removed
0
100
Feet
N



DASHED LINES REPRESENT BASEMENT WALLS